

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
CENTER FOR LOWELL HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

**SHIFTING GEARS PROJECT
LAWRENCE**

**INFORMANT: SANDRA CASHMAN
INTERVIEWER: YILDEREY ERDENER
DATE: MAY 1, 1989**

**Y = YILDEREY
S = SANDRA**

SG-LA-T524

Y: You just uh, you don't need to answer everything. I'm not going to ask personal questions.

S: No. That's what I'm saying. As long as it's not personal. It has something to do with uh (--)

Y: Work and work related.

S: Work and that's it.

Y: Right. So today is May 1st, 1989. It's a Monday. And with me is Mrs. Sandra Cashman.
(S: Right) How do you spell your last name?

S: C A S H M A N

Y: Yeah. And your address is uh (--)

S: 198 Essex Street, Lawrence, Mass.

Y: Uh, your birth date and your birth place?

S: July 29, 1918.

Y: 1918, in Lawrence?

S: Lawrence. Lawrence, Mass.

Y: And uh, what is your ethnic background.

S: Russian decent.

Y: Russian decent. Uh, can you tell me a little bit more? If you think it is personal you don't need to.

S: Like what for instance?

Y: For instance, who came first? Your grandfather, or grandmother?

S: No, no. My mother, my mother came here. She came here in 1913.

Y: From where?

S: Russia, Grodno.

Y: Uh huh. And (--)

S: She had relations here. She had sisters here.

Y: Umhm. So before her there were other people. Her sisters?

S: Well evidently. I'm not too sure about everything. But I think they, they didn't all come at one time.

Y: Yeah. And then she met your (--)

S: She met my father here. He came from the same Province that she did in the old country.

Y: Uh, do you speak Russian?

S: Not too fluently, but I can speak it.

Y: Do you understand.

S: I understand quite a bit. I don't speak the way they speak like say in Moscow, or someplace like that. I speak maybe like from the village. But if they speak in my dialect I can understand them.

Y: So they used to speak at home Russian?

S: Oh always. I went to Russian school.

Y: Yeah, in Lawrence?

S: Oh yeah, they had a Russian school.

Y: I didn't know that.

S: Oh this goes way back. They had a Russian church that burnt down. And it was never brought back because uh, uh, every area has their own kind of people, right? So they had quite a few Russians. And then finally little by little they moved away, or they passed away. When the church burned down, that was the end of the church. So if you wanted any uh, Russian religion, you would have to go to Salem, Mass., or you would have to go to I think Manchester has the Russian Church, Russian Orthodox Church.

Y: Umhm. Well that's very interesting. I never realized that. So uh, (--)

S: Oh they all had churches here at one time. Like I said, there was quite a few like say, Russians, Lithuanians, or Polish, they all had their own churches. But once it burned down that was the end of the church.

Y: But you said there was a Russian school too.

S: Russian school.

Y: Where was that?

S: Now that (--) Well they had the International Institute here on Orchard Street a long, long time ago. And uh, I can't remember where I went. It wasn't at the church, it was somewhere else. But they were teaching us to read and write in Russian.

Y: Yeah. What is your estimation? How many people?

S: How many Russian people?

Y: Russian people, or Russian decent?

S: Russian de (--) Well that I can't, there was quite a few. If, when, when they have a church they have to have a congregation for that church. So maybe there was uh, maybe two to three hundred probably. You know, they're scattered everywhere. Pleasant Valley, or North Andover. They were all over. But that's where they went to church. I can't, I can't give you a definite answer as to how many. (Y: Right) But there were quite a few, because the church used to be crowded, you know. So you're going by that really.

Y: Do you know how your parents met? No?

S: Well I think they met here through other people evidently.

Y: Yeah, there's not family story?

S: No no, no family, as far as I know there's no family story. I mean my mother used to tell me things, but we didn't go into (--) You know, maybe they told us certain things. I can't remember

everything, you know. No, I think they met through other, other people that knew each other, and this is the way it went.

Y: There are unusual stories how people came over by boat, or by other means.

S: Oh they went by steerage of course.

Y: Is there any family story like that?

S: Well my mother said she was deathly sick. And like a bunch of cattle they stole all her food on her. You know, you're laying there, you're dying because you're not used to being on the ocean evidently. And you know what steerage was like. It wasn't easy. And uh, she said she just barely made it coming, she was so deathly sick. And she said they stole her food. I don't know whether they brought, they must have brought certain things with them to get on. It's funny how they, they would allow them to bring food on. When, when you go to Europe today you can't bring anything back from anywhere, but it's, but she said they stole whatever she had. You know, she said she couldn't eat anything anyway. And how long it took them to come over, I can't tell you. I can't recall. I know she'd tell us she was very sick. It must have been a rough trip. And Lord knows how long it took.

Y: Yeah, what about your father? How did he come here?

S: Well evidently the (--)

Y: There was anyone who was uh, sponsored him?

S: I don't know who he, I don't know all that. No. You know it's a funny thing. When you asked questions sometimes they even forgot. You know they forgot certain things. And my mother would say, how do I remember all these things. Then I wouldn't think to ask who brought this one over. I'm assuming that they were relations and friends that brought them over. You know, somebody came first and sponsored them, or whatever it was. And I think at that time, well came, see, we had the "Bread and Roses Strike", and she came 1913. So evidently it must have been over when she came here. (Y: Yeah) Didn't we have the "Bread and Roses" in 19 uh, (Y: 12) 1912. She came over 1913.

Y: Yeah. And when did they get married?

S: When did they get married? (Y: Your parents?) Oh god, I can't remember now.

Y: Are you the first child?

S: No, I, I have a brother. He's in Virginia. He's two years older than I am. So he was the first, I was the second. And I had a sister.

Y: So one brother, two sisters. (S: One brother, two) They had one brother and two daughters. One boy (S: one boy), and two girls.

S: [Chuckles] Right.

Y: And what is her name?

S: My sister? Anna.

Y: Is she also her in Lawrence?

S: No, she's passed away. My mother's gone, my sister's gone.

Y: You're the only healthy person.

S: Well I have my brother and he's not too well either. So I'm the only one that's left that's healthy.

Y: Uh huh. You said that's he's in Virginia?

S: He's in Richmond, Virginia.

Y: Umhm. And uh, what is your parent's names? [S: Like what?] Their first name? What was your father's name? What is your father's name?

S: Well he was uh, you mean his last, first name? Michael.

Y: Michael, yeah. And last name?

S: Pacewich, P-A-C-E-W-I-C-H. But I'll tell you something, that's not even uh, what do you call it? My sister, my brother and I had that name, but each one spelled it different. However they heard it either in school, or whatever, that's, or the Doctor's when the children were being born, right? We all have three, three different last names.

Y: You mean the pronunciation?

S: They pronounce it different. You know, if I'm saying something to you in my own sort of dialect, you're going to hear it in a different way than somebody else's. So each one had a different last name.

Y: What is it, Pacewich?

S: Pacewich. [Y: Pacewich] Mine was Pacewich. My sister's was Piacevich. My brother's was Packewicz. So there you are. You wonder what the (--) Well whoever said it, this is the way it sounded like to somebody else. And each one is uh, you know(--)

Y: What is the Russian name. You said Michael, but uh, I guess that was [S: Mehile, Mehile] Mehile? [S: Mehile] Yeah, and what about your mother?

S: Anastasia.

Y: Anast, that's one name I like so much, Anastasia. [S: Yeah] And her maiden name?

S: Kostechko.

Y: Kostechko.

S: Well any of those I know I've seen pictures that they're dancing out there, or whatever. Everybody is different I suppose, you know, some were deathly sick, other's could tolerate it, but uh, I can't say for sure, you know, whether they're all ill or not. But uh, nobody, nobody was used to traveling like that either.

Y: Yeah. Uh, can you tell me a little bit about where you went to school, and when you graduated and when you then started working?

S: Well I graduated in 1936, and I(--)

Y: Which school did you go to?

S: Lawrence High.

Y: But before that?

S: Well I went to the Oliver School.

Y: Umhm, and uh, where were you living at that time?

S: Lawrence. [Y: Lawrence?] Yeah.

Y: And uh, '36 you said? 1936?

S: 1936.

Y: So you were uh, how old? Eighteen?

S: About that. [Y: Yeah] Turning eighteen.

Y: '36. So the depression was still?

S: Oh it was still on. There was no jobs anywhere. I mean I was lucky to get into the mill. My aunt worked as a weaver. She and her husband worked as weavers, and that's how she got me in. That was one of my first jobs at the mills.

Y: In what mill?

S: At the Lower, Number 10, Number 10 Pacific Mills. It was called Number 10 Pacific Mills.

Y: So in those days as you said, finding a job was real hard. [Few words unclear]

S: You couldn't find a job period.

Y: What was your first job, what did you do?

S: I was a drop wire girl for the weavers.

Y: Drop, what's it called?

S: Drop wire. (Y: Yeah, what did you do?) What you had to do is take these wire tongs, they looked like tongs and they had an opening in the center like, very thin. And you took a handful of them and with this hand you push this thread through one end, and push that thread through an end. This is what you have to do. You couldn't skip a thread. You know what I'm talking about? [Y: Yeah] So you had the threads lower and higher. And each thread had to be moved and drop a wire, and pick this. And drop a wire, and drop a wire.

Y: It was a real wire, or ?

S: Wires. Well it was, it was very thin. I can't show you. It's like a, like a uh, (Y: just describe it, it's a) like a prong. It was like this, you know. And not, not thin wire, flat. But uh, just an opening in the center so you could drop it in. I mean it didn't fall down or anything on the threads. It held itself up, but that's what the job was called.

Y: So uh, graduating from the high school, was it uh, repetitive, boring thing to do for you? I mean uh, (S: What? the job?) the job itself.

S: Of course it was boring. And noisy and boring, and uh, what do you call it? Well you know, you'd have to lean over. The job was in here. You'd have to lean over the, whatever they call these things for the weavers. I can't think of it. (Y: Unclear) And you have to kind of lean over. And this is what you have to do. And you know, you're standing in an awkward position doing it. What are you going to do? That's what your job was.

Y: For eight hours, or whatever.

S: Eight hours, yes. Eight hours.

Y: And how did you feel? That was the first experience in the job?

S: You start at six in the morning. You had to start six in the morning till two. So that means you got up say, quarter past five the latest. You could walk to work. From where I lived I could walk to work. So my aunt and I, you know, I met her downstairs and off we'd go. We'd start work at six o'clock. I don't recall, there might have been a break, but I can't recall. There must

have been some kind of a break. You did not have lunch. You worked through the lunch from six to two. You did not have a break. You put in eight hours. That was your eight hours.

Y: No break at all?

S: You didn't have a break. I you brought anything you ate it, either while you were working, or there might have been a break of some kind. They'd have to be a break. You have to go to the bathroom, or something. You might have eaten on the job, or whatever, but you came home and ate more or less. Or you picked up something when you went to work. I can't recall a break. I don't remember getting out at two thirty. Do you understand what I mean? Because if you had a break you'd be out at two-thirty. We used to get out of work at two o'clock. (Y: Umhm) And we started at six on the dot.

Y: When did you get up in order to be on time?

S: About five. You have to. I mean you know, you got to wake yourself up, wash your face, probably have a little breakfast before you left. You left, say about quarter to six, twenty minutes to six, and got there. And you know, by the time you get organized and start.

Y: How did you get there?

S: Walk. Well we didn't live too far. We live on Lowell Street, and Number 10 was (--) We'll say Lowell Street is here, this is Hampshire Street, Number 10 was near the canal. (Y: It is?) Yeah.

Y: And I think, everyone walked in those days, whether at work or uh (--)

S: Well yeah. Those that uh, those that worked closer to the mills and lived closer, fine, but if you lived say past the Spicket River, you may walk to work just to get the fresh air, but would usually take a bus back, because you didn't get out say till ten o'clock or something. This was like the second shift.

Y: Yeah. When did they take off the street cars?

S: Oh, that I can't tell you. I can't, I can't remember all of this. I remember the street cars. I think I remember them. I think I remember seeing, on Lowell Street I thought I saw tracks on the road, so. You know, but it's been so long ago that uh, you can't remember everything, until somebody brings up something, and then it comes back to you.

Y: Yeah, and how long did you work on that job?

S: Well let's see. I worked there, well I worked there until I got laid off of course. You know, sometimes they, they hire a lot of people so they can push out the work, or whatever it is. Where did I got from there? I went, 19, I started in 1936.

Y: I mean more or less.

S: Well I stayed with the Lower Pacific Mills. I what do you call it? I never uh, I never worked in any other mills except the Lower Pacific. Now let me see. I might have got a job after that there, maybe, I don't know. I can't recall when I started, but I stayed there till I had gone in the service. So I went, I think (--)

Y: Which was uh, what? 1940 uh (--)

S: In 1943.

Y: And so between 1936 (--)

S: And '43, I worked in number (--). Well they're both Pacific Mills. One was called Lower Pacific, the other one was called Number 10.

Y: But you did not do the same job?

S: No, no, no, no. I worked in Shipping and Receiving. Well I worked nights for awhile on a certain job, but I can't even think of a damn job now that I think about it. But anyway, I got a chance to work days, which I like better.

Y: Which is what? Two to (--)

S: Shipping and Receiving.

Y: What was the shift?

S: It was uh, it was like seven to three-thirty, or something like that. Yeah, I think that was the time. Seven to three-thirty.

Y: And so these are the two things you did?

S: That's all until I went in the service. Then I came out. I went back to work for awhile, and then I got married.

Y: Yeah. Did you, did you like your job in the mills, what you did?

S: Well I worked in Shipping and Receiving, it was a lot cleaner. It was checking numbers, you know, checking different numbers and all that. There was uh, I like it. I didn't mind it. It wasn't as noisy as the other rooms were that you can't hear a thing, you know. So other than that I enjoyed it. I didn't mind it. You know, they didn't push you. You went, you just did your work. You went along and did your work. Nobody pushed you or anything. You know what I mean. You just went along with your work and all that. So there was no problem there.

Y: So compared with the first job the conditions were better?

S: Oh well, the conditions, weaver made good money, because they were like on piece work. They made good money. But like myself, I was just paid you know, daily and uh, regular work like. But it was noisy, you can't hear anything. This is what you hear all day long, you know.

Y: In the weaving room? I thought that (--)

S: Very noisy in the weaving room. Those shuttles are going back and forth! They don't stop! You can't. I mean if one, the thread breaks you got to stop it. Do it, and do it again, you know what I mean. You didn't (--) I mean sometimes they went, they went along fine. You might have a chance to rest, or something in between, but very little, because you had so many. By the time you got finished with one, you'd start all over again. Do you know what I mean? That's the way it was.

Y: Did you have any chance to become a weaver?

S: No, I don't think I would want that.

Y: You did not want?

S: No, I don't think I would want that. (Y: You did not want) No.

Y: Although you said they were paid (--)

S: They were (--) I never liked piece work. I always, I always felt you either pushed yourself too much, or somebody was pushing you. They made good money, because like I say, it was piece work and all that. They made good money, but they really kept their nose to the grind stone. So. No, I never like piece work no matter where it was. Like uh, some people worked in the shoe shops. They kill each other. They take work away from one another. I don't like none of that stuff, you know what I mean?

Y: You mean the competition like?

S: The competition. And then they might want the better quality, or an easier way of doing something. And there's too many disagreements. So. Not that I worked in the shoe shops. I never did. But I'm just saying, in the (--) But anyway she liked that job. The both of them, because that's what they started on and I think they got adjusted to it. So, you know, I suppose. But I never liked that room, because it was very very noisy. You can't hear anything in a weaving room. You know, you got to make signs and all that. That's about it. Right! That's the only way you hear anything. So when I had a chance to get out of all that, and got (--) Well shipping and receiving, it's a quieter job. You don't hear the noise like you hear anywhere else.

Y: But didn't you lift heavy boxes, or (--)

S: No, no. We had rolls of cloth, they were already wrapped. You know, they're already wrapped. There's numbers on them. They have to coincide with the numbers that you have on the sheet. And you got to check it before it goes out, and all that stuff. So everything was

wrapped. They had them on these uh, oh I don't know what they called them, but they're these long things. They had so many. And the tickets were all on the outside. So you read all the tickets and coincided with the ones you had on a board, or whatever.

Y: In the mills uh, were there some jobs for just men or women? Did you notice such a thing?

S: Yes. Women that worked as perchers. They used to sit near the windows, and they used to have material. They had to check the material for little knobs, or little openings, or whatever. I can't describe every job.

Y: No, I don't expect it. I don't expect it.

S: You know, it's pretty hard. But I remember them because I worked upstairs with this Mr. Harold [Mert?], she was my boss like, I worked upstairs. And what he used to do is take swatches, he used to call them swatches of cloth that was dyed, say it was blue. But not all, not all shade. When you do it everyday, dying, they're not all going to be perfect. It looks perfect to you, but it doesn't. I used to put them up on the board like, and of course the windows behind us, he could see, and he would kind of match which ones had to go with each other. And that's what was sent out. That's what they would dye, or whatever it was, you know. So I mean that was one of the jobs that he had done. And then further down in the same room were perchers that would check all of the material coming down for little knobs, or some things wrong with the material.

Y: So they were all women, or?

S: They were mostly all women doing that job. They had men doing other jobs, but I can't even think of what the other jobs were now.

Y: Like uh, mule spinning? You were (--)

S: Yes, but that was in a different section of the mills, you know.

Y: Could you go around to while you were working in the mills and wonder what the other people did?

S: No, you kind of (--) No, no, no. They wouldn't allow you to do it. You only stayed on your side. Like say the Lower Pacific. If you wanted to go to the other parts you'd have to probably go outside of the building, or there might have been an area that you could go through, or something. You didn't go wondering around. No, no. No, you didn't do that.

Y: And you did not know what, what you produced? You did not see the end product?

S: Well the end product was woolens. We did woolens. Woolens and Worsteds in Lawrence. All the mills did woolens and worsteds.

Y: But you did not see it. You know that that was the product, but (--)

S: Well I, yeah, let me see. Where did I see it now? Well no, no. I didn't see it. See by the time it came to us it was already finished. It's already packaged. You know what I mean. It's already bundled up and all that. I didn't (--) We were making like I say, woolens and worsteds. I just saw swatches of whatever material we had, you know.

Y: People talk about you know, we were so proud of what we produced. Uh, (--)

S: Well it was good quality, you know.

Y: Were you proud of what uh (--)

S: Well of course. And of course during the war they made all the materials for the soldiers and all that, you know. Oh sure.

Y: Most of the men I thought uh, well not most, but some of them who had the high school diploma, in those days people did not graduate from high school, they just uh (--)

S: A lot of them didn't because things were so tough around that time. It was really tough around that time. I mean nobody had anything really. You know, I mean that's why I say, when I said, you were lucky to get into the mills. If you got other jobs they didn't pay anything. You know what I mean? I used to take care of kids like during the summer and all that, but what did you, you know what you'd get paid? Three dollars a week. Maybe doing, maybe taking care of a house, if you did housework and you took care of children, they paid you three dollars a week. Would you believe it. I mean now you can't see it. When I was working in the mills, what do you think I was getting before I went in the service? Sixteen dollars a week, but that was a long time ago. I would say that was like in forty-three, making sixteen dollars a week. You say, "gee, that isn't very much", but it seemed like that was, that was a lot of money from the mills, compared to other places. This is what I'm saying. Now where would you get a job elsewhere? Where would you work? Even office girls didn't make what you made? Would you believe it? You know, people think because you work in an office, you're going to get more money, you know. Even that's the same way as it is today. You work in these bigger plants, you make more money than some of the other people make.

Y: Did uh, where did your father work?

S: Let's see. Well he worked in one of the mills. I think it was, let's see, was it the Ayer Mill? I think it was the Ayer mill that he worked in.

Y: But he worked in textile [unclear].

S: They all did, everybody did.

Y: Some of them worked for paper companies. Some of them worked for shoe shop, and some of them (--)

S: Oh I'm sure, I'm sure. But I'm just saying the majority that I knew worked in the mills. Yeah.

Y: And your mother, did she also work?

S: Yeah, she worked in the mills too.

Y: Ayer Mill?

S: Yeah, she worked in the Ayer Mill. My sister and my mother worked in the Ayer Mill. I never worked in the Ayer Mill, or any (--) I only worked in the Lower Pacific and Number 10.

Y: Did your brother also work?

S: He, no. Never worked. He might have worked in the mill from the beginning, but then he didn't. He uh, he became a short order cook. Somebody gave him a job in a diner. I mean jobs are hard to get. Even to get into the mills it wasn't very easy, believe me. You had to know somebody to get into the dam mills. So uh, what do you call it. He got a job as a short order cook. Then he joined the service and he made a career out of the Service.

Y: So, and all your siblings?

S: My son?

Y: No, no, siblings. Your sister, your brother and you, none of them went to college?

S: No, God no. You couldn't afford to. Who would send you? Who would send you to college? You couldn't afford. You had to work.

Y: But if your parents would have money for one, who would be the one?

S: Well I don't, I suppose(--) You know in those days they used to think it was, well you would send the man. You wouldn't send the girls, because girls are going to get married. They get out of school and they get married. That's what they used to think. Today things have changed. But they would send a boy rather than girls, because everybody is, well what are they going to do? They're going to get out of school and they're going to get married. So what to they need a college education for?

Y: That's one of the things which changed too, and uh (--)

S: Of course, of course. They need something to fall back on also in case anything happens, you know. When you stop and think of a woman, she loses her husband, what does she got to fall back on? She's only gone to high school really. You know, high school isn't much. What are you going to get from high school? Unless you get into these big plants. And that way you have an opportunity to further yourself if you really want to. There are schools to go to in the plants.

Y: The reason why I'm asking, um, so that was not enough money, everyone is working in those

19 uh (--)

S: You have to work. You have to pull your own weight.

Y: Yeah, and another thing which I think changed was uh, in those days people worked for the family.

S: Of course. I mean you (--)

Y: Was it true for you also?

S: Yes. I mean whatever you made.

Y: For the group you belonged to. (S: Whatever you made) You couldn't say, well I graduated from high school, I am going to Boston and have my apartment if I can.

S: You couldn't afford it.

Y: But if you would afford it, would you do it?

S: I don't think so. I think at that particular, things weren't that way at one time. I know girls who went someplace else because they couldn't find work in Lawrence. One went to Boston and she got into a dental plant. Then I went to visit her and I figured I'd get a job around there too, couldn't get a job so I had to come home. But I'm just saying that uh, you didn't go because you felt like you wanted to go and explore an adventure. You went because you had to get a job somewhere. So naturally you'd rather be home, you know. I didn't think people wanted to go anywhere outside of their own family. I think they kind of stuck together more. It isn't like today. The people get uh (--) Well when I went in the service, I mean I was uh, I think I was what? Twenty. So it wasn't like I was a child, you know what I mean. I worked in the mills and I just felt like uh, well not that everybody is doing their little bit, it was just something different to do. Everybody was gone into the service. So I decided to go to.

Y: You must be older than twenty though, because you said you started eighteen. I mean it's not important, but uh, you started at the age of eighteen. (S: Eighteen) And if you worked uh, [phone rings] um, and uh, the question I was going to ask uh, in those days people did not really graduate from high school like you did. But those who did had better chances of becoming section hand, or things like that.

S: Oh yeah, you were a little more knowledgeable. (Y: But uh, were)

SIDE ONE ENDS

SIDE TWO BEGINS

Y: After you got in could you uh, did you get any promotion in other words?

S: No, you more or less stayed. I worked in different sections. I mean you'd stay so long and

then maybe when things are slow up there they might put you in another department, you know. It would more or less be about the same money.

Y: Same money, no uh (--)

S: No. Like I say uh, I think I was making, I can't recall any more than sixteen dollars a week. In fact I was making (--) Yeah, sixteen dollars a week. I worked nights in the Lower Pacific and I had a chance to go on days. One of the boss asked me if I wanted to go work in the office, because I wasn't like some of the women there. They didn't even speak good english some of them, you know. And I said, how much is the pay? He said, fourteen. I said, I don't want it. I would rather (--) He said, but you're going to work in the office and it's cleaner. That wasn't the point. The point was you were going to be short two dollars. So I says, no. But when I changed jobs, he said, why don't you give it a try. So when I changed jobs I still got sixteen dollars. But they were going to lower it down to two dollars less than what it was. So there you are. So the job may be cleaner, but you were going to get less money.

Y: So were there women bosses around?

S: No. I just, I just remem (--) No, they all seem to be men, the men bosses. They might have a woman that might have been head of something, because she was the oldest there, but she wasn't the boss. No I had all, all men bosses that I can recall. Yeah, all men, all men.

Y: So you did not have any chance to become a boss in other words?

S: I don't like being a boss over anybody. That's not my uh, I will help somebody out, or, but I don't want to be over any body. No, I don't recall uh, what do you call it? No, they didn't have any women bosses, they were all men where I worked. They might have had them somewhere else, but I can't recall. No, they're all like section hands. There were men that were sections hands. Women didn't do those kinds of jobs. No way.

Y: But do you think women would do the same job as well as men?

S: That's what I'm trying to say. I don't think at that particular time that they, they always assumed it was the man who was the boss, not the women. There were not women that were over anybody that I can recall. They might have had somebody in the office that was there a lot longer, or she had more responsibilities or something, but I can't recall anybody like that. So.

Y: Some women told me that there was some sexual harassment from uh, bosses.

S: Oh sure. (Y: Did you know?) You got this on tape? I don't want to put this on tape.

Y: Don't give any names, but uh (--)

S: I can't remember the names. I remember working in uh, what do you call it? In the weaving. I was only a kid then, like seventeen, or something around that. And you're very gullible, you're very naive. You know, because things aren't like they are today. People used to bring the

section hand at the end of the week fresh eggs, vegetables, fruits, just to keep their job, to be on the right side of them. Well that's the way it used to be. I mean he was the one that lauded over you. And if he decided he didn't want you there, he'd say out! That would be the end. You were fired. You didn't have anybody to run to to see why, you know what I mean.

Y: What, what did you bring to the section hands?

S: Well I didn't bring him anything. But the thing was he used to go by once in awhile and said, well how's she doing, you know, and all that. Then he got a little bolder, then he'd go by and give me a pat on the behind, which I didn't particularly thing that was necessary. Then the next step uh, he asked if I'd like to go out. I thought to myself, I'm on seven (--) You're an old man. You're asking me to go out? I was shocked, but that's the way it was. I didn't show up of course.

Y: Did you lose your job?

S: He'd come in, Monday he'd come in with that look, you know, and I think I might have been not transferred or anything, but evidently there wasn't enough of work or something, who knows! I'm not even sure myself really. But I'm just saying that's the way, that wasn't for everybody. You know, I worked, I worked with another boss in a little, a little smaller than this place was, you know. He had the uh, what do you call swatches to look at. And I'd have to do the paper work. The nicest person in the world to me. So there you are. So it all depends, you know. Yeah. So like I say, they might have been. And they see when you don't have like unions, you don't have anybody to run to, you're afraid in your own way. If you have a nice boss, I had another nice boss, a Mr. Alexander who was the nicest guy in the world. I mean even if you made a mistake, he kind of overlooked it for you, you know what I mean? And he'd try to help you. He was the one that said, why don't you get a job in the office. He says, you know, you know what you're doing, or talking about, or whatever it is. And for some reason or other, I wasn't sure whether I wanted to go or not. But he was a nice guy too. But they weren't all the same, you know.

Y: They were all english people, or Irish, or (--)

S: Well this one, the older man I told you about, he was French. Uh, Mr. Alexander, he might have been English, Mr. Alexander. Mr. Murch, I think he might have been English, I'm not sure, you know. Yeah, oh they had Italian bosses. They had all kinds, you know. It depends where you worked at. So you can't, you can't say they were all of one. No, different nationalities, yeah.

Y: Can you tell me a little bit more about what, what people did to what people to keep their jobs. That was one way to secure job in those times.

S: One way. Yeah, well that was just to be on the right side of him, you know, stuff like that. No, the only think I could think of, you just kept your nose to the grind stone. You didn't, you didn't have time to fool around, you had to keep those machines going. You had too many machines.

Y: What you said was interesting, that some people brought fresh eggs, and uh (--)

S: Oh yeah, sure, off the farms. They lived on the farms and worked in the mills, you know, or wherever they worked. Wherever they lived. And uh, well they uh, you know, would bring vegetables in and all that stuff. Sure. They all did it. They all did it.

Y: For example um (--)

S: Now maybe in the Wood Mill and the Ayer Mill you might have had a lot more Italians, because that was the section they were in. You know, where the Ayer and the Wood Mill, that was, if you went across the bridge that was all Italian section. Where I lived there was a mixture of everything. So we worked in the Pacific, in the Lower Pacific, or Number 10. Then they had all these other places. But they were all from all over. I can't say one (--) Well I had Italians working with me when I worked in the Lower Pacific. You know, like I say, there was a mixture. I can't, I can't put everybody in the same category. Maybe those who worked in the mills, maybe there was a lot of Italians there, and maybe that's what they saw. But I can't say I saw just a certain group. In fact I can't even remember now. You know, that's so long ago. You can't recall. You just remember that they did certain things like that, you know. They'd bring in fresh eggs, or whatever they got off the farm, you know. See, they all used to work in the mills, but they all had little farms on their own like. Not that they lived on farms.

Y: Yeah, tell me, tell me a little bit. Right, tell me a little bit about that.

S: I don't anything about that either. I don't recall us having anything like that. But I know people have little plots of land that were either in the Pleasant Valley, or wherever they were, and that's how they had extra things, you know. But I can't recall who had all that. I think Italians have a tendency to go for the soil, right. Even my mother, she used to like, because I remember her having a little, in the back yard she used to have a little garden there and plant things, and everything. They all come from, anybody that came from the old country that lived in the country loves the soil, you know that.

Y: Did your mother have chickens, or (--)

S: No, no, no, no, no.

Y: Some people had chickens [unclear].

S: They might have had chickens. That I can't tell you.

Y: But your mother did not have chickens. (S: No, no, no,) She just uh, she just plant herbs or things like that?

S: Well like vegetables, you know. Carrots and I guess potatoes, cabbage, or whatever she grew. I can't recall.

Y: Did you have a big plot or something?

S: No, no, no, a small one. Maybe a square size of this room. That's all. [Brief malfunction in tape] Lebonese, Polish, or Lithuanian, or whatever, you know what I mean?

Y: On which street was that?

S: That was Lowell Street. I, I think we had let's see, French, Jewish, Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, French, Portuguese, well I would say we had eight or nine different nationalities. Jewish. So we'd have at least eight, or nine, or even ten different Jewish, different nationalities. So you got, you go around the corner and it's Lebonese. You go further down the street and see, the Italians had their own section. Syrians had their on section. Where I lived I think I was very cosmopolitan, because we had every nationality.

Y: Did you interact with those kids?

S: Yes! Yes.

Y: As a kid did you have (--)

S: Yeah, I used to have all kind of friends that come up and they would like my mother's soup and the bread. And I would love their food and their bread.

Y: So you became friends in fact.

S: Oh yeah! That's what I'm saying. I liked it where I, because we were not just one nationality. We were a mixture of nationalities. So you got to learn all the different ethnic ways of people like, you know, their foods and everything else. And you got along. It's a funny thing. In those days you know, we'd call somebody a square head, or, or a French a frog, or but nobody seemed to be angry about it like they are today. When you say something today about somebody they're, they're up in arms. You know what I mean? On our street we had every nationality you can think of, and we got along fine.

Y: Do you remember any other nicknames, like frogs for the French Canadians.

S: Okay, let's see. Warps, [daygos].

Y: Daygos are?

S: Italians. (Y: Daygos?) Daygos, Italians. Warps, Lebonese. Syrian, Zip.

Y: Oh, I didn't hear those things.

S: Syrian is Zip. That was one. Uh, the newer version later on was camel, camel rider, or jockey rider, whatever, you know what I mean. The Jews uh, what did they call them? Kikes. (Y: Kikes?) Kike. Yeah, a Jew is a Kike.

Y: What about Russians?

S: Square Head.

Y: Square Head?

S: Square Head, yeah. A Polish Square Head, because you're all in the same category. Lithuanian, Polish, Russian, all similar. So, Ukranian. So you're all (--)

Y: Didn't she get offend? (S: No) Offend?

S: Because you played with these different kids, or you, you knew everybody on the street! Everybody kind of watched out for each other. It wasn't like me, me, me. You know what I mean. When you put, well we didn't have television. We found our own ways of doing things. We used to sit around and embroider. Or we'd go swimming in the pools. Or we'd play hopscotch on the street.

Y: You did that?

S: Yeah.

Y: Hopscotch? What is Hopscotch?

S: Well you make it with the chalk, you make uh, whatever it is with the boxes and all that. Well what else were you going to do, you know. You found your own way of doing things. Not today where you sit in front of the tube there. So there you are. Now I think, I think we had more diversions in our own way, and uh, we just uh, to me we got along better with everybody. Today everybody moved away from the neighborhoods, they went somewhere else. Different ones came in. And I don't know.

Y: And as a growing up young girl did you date other nationalities? Or did one date in those days uh (--)

S: Well yeah, more or less your family would like to see you go with your own kind, because they could speak the same language, you have the same things. Uh, you know what I mean. You did everything about the same more or less. If you were, like if you're Polish, or Russian, or Lithuanian, or Ukranian, we all have the same ways of doing things. So naturally if you intermingled, if you married a Lebanese, or an Italian, what did you have in common with him? The family, I think it was because the family didn't speak good english. And so they could, they could speak in their own language, so they would like to talk to somebody in their own language. But you know, little by little we all got away from that really when you stop and think about it.

Y: But you end up marrying somebody (--)

S: I married somebody that was Irish. So there you are.

Y: Did your parents mind that? Do you remember [unclear].

S: No. No. My, what do you call it? My father passed away, so he had nothing to say about it. My mother, that was up to me. I was a grown up person. It was up to me, you know. As long as he was good to you, that's all that counted. I think they all got away from it little by little, because the younger ones would bring the different ones in. And this is the way it all started. More or less people uh, I always say if you marry your own kind you have more in common with one another, that you'd been brought up similarly. You know what I mean? If you're too far apart from one another in uh, what do you call it now? The word for it? Culture. Unless you adapt to it, fine.

Y: Yeah. Can you tell me a little bit about what you did in leisure time? Or was uh (--)

S: Dancing. (Y: Dancing where?) Swimming. (Y: Yeah?) Well he had a lot of uh, we had a lot of ballrooms.

Y: What were, can you tell me those names? Ballrooms in Lawrence, [unclear].

S: In Lawrence the Recreation, it was called.

Y: Whatever you remember. I mean you don't need to remember everything.

S: I can't remember them all. (Y: Yeah) They had uh, you looking for something hard to put underneath there? (Y: Yeah) Well the Recreation Ballroom which was on Hampshire Street.

Y: Recreation Ballroom.

S: Recreation. We called it the Rec. (Y: Rec) Rec Ballroom.

Y: Uh huh. And uh (--)

S: And they had the Essex Ballroom on Essex Street. It wasn't as big as, the Recreation was the biggest. Of course you had Canobie Lake. You had busses going to Canobie Lake. We used to go dancing there, because you heard all the big bands, you know. And you'd go to Lowell too. That would be uh, I can't even think of that one now.

Y: I doesn't matter. But in Lowell there was another.

S: Oh, they had them everywhere, no matter where! [Comment unclear] Uh, Shawsheen Village, they had the Shawsheen, I think it was called the Shawsheen Spar was outdoors. The Crystal Ballroom was in Andover.

Y: Crystal Ballroom.

S: Crystal Ballroom was in Andover. And the Shawsheen Spar was an outdoor place for the summer. So you always had somewhere to go.

Y: How did you get there?

S: Well you either had buses to take you, or a street, no it wasn't street cars then, buses. You had buses to take you then. It wasn't that far to go anyway. Or you had friends who, somebody who had a car. However you got there, you got there. I don't, I can't even remember now. But I think you could get, you could get a bus to go there. Buses were plentiful. It isn't like today. You had one bus after the other it seemed, because everybody took buses. It isn't like today, everybody has a car.

Y: So in Lawrence there was one Essex Street, uh, Essex Ballroom?

S: Essex Ballroom, which was on a smaller scale. The recreation was the biggest. (Y: New Hampshire) The what? (Y: It was in) On Hampshire Street.

Y: Oh, it was in Lawrence [unclear]?

S: Yes, it was right in Lawrence. Oh sure!

Y: New Hampshire still (--)

S: You know we had an opera house here to? You know that. Okay.

Y: Did you go there?

S: I can't remember. That's way before my time.

Y: Umhm. (S: Yeah) And so dancing was big uh (--)

S: Dancing was the biggest thing. Uh, you didn't, you didn't go into night clubs. You were too young to begin with.

Y: But there were night clubs?

S: There were night clubs, yes. They had some nice night clubs here at one time. They had a place (--)

Y: Any name do you remember?

S: All right. The Paradise was on Broadway, which was a very nice night club. And uh, they had a beautiful one on Essex Street. It had a floor that came right up, you know. And I can't think of that one now. Isn't that funny.

Y: That's all right.

S: But it was a nice, beautiful night club. Nice, nice food. You had like dinner dancing there. It

was a nice place to go to. You had a lot of nice clubs here at one time. Not like these dives that they have today. You had nice, nice clubs.

Y: And uh, when, not you necessarily, when people did go to those ballrooms, during the week days or weekends?

S: Well I think (--) [Clears throat] Well Canobie Lake was open in the summer time. So you went more or less in the summer. You would have dancing I think from Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday. At least three times a week. That was Canobie Lake. And they used to have check dancing. You only paid ten cents to get in. And the boys, the boys would have to buy tickets. [Laughing] So it would only cost you ten cents to get in.

Y: The entrance is ten cents.

S: Just the entrance is ten cents to get in, because it was check dancing. So the boys would have to buy the tickets, you know, ten cents a dance. And that's how they did it.

Y: What year are we talking about?

S: Well I can't even remember now. (Y: So you were in) Well it was before the war. I know that. I can't recall check dancing after the war. I can't recall that.

Y: What do you mean exactly by check dancing?

S: You pay ten cents to get into the ballroom. The boys have to buy tickets, ten cents a dance. So you know, if you're all standing around he's got the tickets in his hand and he picks out somebody he wants to dance with. He has to give the guy the ticket before he gets on the floor. That's (--) It isn't like uh, you know how they have these uh, I'm sure you saw it in the movies, or somewhere, where they used to have what they called "check dancing". The girls would stand around and they'd get the tickets, you know, they'd give it to the girl. Well that's how she earned her living, by dancing with these diff (--) This is altogether different. This is the boy, the guy buys the tickets and he hands it to the guy where you're getting on the floor. There wasn't just one spot to get on the floor. They were everywhere. Everywhere you wanted to go there was an opening, but there was a guy standing there. So now you have to give him the ticket before you get on the floor. So that's the way (--) He could spend twenty dollars dancing all night. And all you spent was a dime. [Laughing] But that, that was one time. And it wasn't check dancing all the time. You know, you had your bands. I don't know what you would pay. I can't recall how much you would pay. But you paid just a certain amount to go see them. Otherwise it was just the regular dancing. Whether it was like fifty cents to get in, I can't, I can't remember now.

Y: Yeah. I understand some people met their spouses there?

S: Oh I'm sure, if you like to dance, I mean uh, you know.

Y: No, I mean they met their husbands, or wives there.

S: Right. You both liked to dance and you got along fine with each other. And you didn't go in for drinking and stuff like that. Well we went for what we like to do. We used to like to dance, you know. And either you met different ones, or they got serious, or whatever, you know.

Y: So how did people learn dancing? How did you learn dancing?

S: Just picked it up.

Y: No instruction from your friends?

S: No. You just started. I don't remember now that you asked me. I just liked it. If it's something you like to do, you're going to do it aren't you? If it's something you're going to make up your mind you want to do it. No, you just pick it up. And you pick up, you pick up steps from somebody else. And this is how. And if you like to do it you're going to just fall right into it.

Y: The reason I'm asking, some women told me that they used to dance in the ladies room. They used to dance behind the machines. [S: Laughs] They used to learn their steps there.

S: We'll see what they're do (--) Yeah. I'm sure they did.

Y: But you did not dance (--)

S: No, I don't recall that. I know they, during, during that time, of course we all like to dance. You go with the group that you, that do the same things, you know. We used to go to these different dances that they had around the city, and they had loads of them. This is when Arthur Murray came out. He had a studio here, Arthur Murray's Dance Studio. You heard about the Murray, right?

Y: I have not.

S: Never heard of Arthur Murray?

Y: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes, yes, yes, yes.

S: God, he's a legend. (Y: yes, yes) Okay. So they had an Arthur Murray Studio here. He just sold his name to the different ones. And they used to have dances everywhere. There, there might be two or three dances in one night somewhere. There was someplace to go every night if you wanted to go. My mother just wouldn't let me, you know. Uh, it's uh, just (--) And you go in and it's for nothing. You don't pay for anything. And they have these people that have gone dancing you know, that are learning how to dance, like the [unclear] or something. And we would like be partners for them. And that's how, you know, they picked it up because uh (--) Or you do the Cha Cha, or you do all these Latin, that's when it was big and everything. And you enjoyed it because it was something for you to do, you know, but I'm just saying there was something to do all the time, especially dancing. They don't, they don't do the same things anymore. You know, when you stop and think, they do have Ballrooms uh, maybe around

Boston, or Revere. We used to even go to Revere to go to the Wonderland Ballroom. Big, big ballroom there. Huge ballroom. And we used to travel all the time. At least twice a week sometimes to go. But it got to a point that the woman who took us in the car, she was the last one to go home. She'd have to park her car in a garage somewhere and then walk from there. And that's when things were getting terrible. But you were afraid to be out along anywhere at night. She stopped going. So we stopped going, you know. But those that lived around Boston, close by, they just get on a, on a bus, or on a you know, what do they call it? Subway, and it brings them right there. So.

Y: So was it so that the girls got together and [clears throat].

S: Oh yeah, they'd be like uh (--)

Y: Two, three, four [unclear].

S: At least five of us anyway. Three in the back and two in the front, you know. And we'd either go there, or we'd go to Lowell. Or we'd go to Canobie Lake, or whoever had a car to go somewhere with. You know what I mean. So this is how (--) And we used to all pitch in a dollar for the gas.

Y: Do you remember the name in Lowell? You couldn't remember before. That's all right. I can ask someone else.

S: It's on the tip of my tongue. (Y: Right) And they had a beautiful ballroom there. They had uh, oh god. Isn't that funny how, but anyway, they had a beautiful ballroom. The Commodore. The Commodore! The Commodore Ballroom in Lowell.

Y: The Commodore.

S: The Commodore.

Y: And uh, what about uh, swimming?

S: We had pools everywhere.

Y: In Lawrence?

S: Yeah. We had one uh, you know where the Central High is? Well they had a pool there. Big one. We used to go there all the time. Then they'd have one in South Lawrence. They had one up on Prospect Hill. Yup. I think there were, I would say let's see, one, two, three. There might have been four pools in the city of Lawrence to go to.

Y: What about beaches? Salisbury. Everyone went there I understand.

S: Well it was the place to go too, because where else were you going to go if you wanted to go to the beach? So Salisbury was the closest to go, or Hampton, either one you know.

Y: Hampton. (S: Hampton) Which one did you go?

S: Either one, it didn't matter. Hampton, or uh, wherever somebody wanted to go, that's where we went. The sand was the same either at Hampton, or Salisbury. You know, beautiful sand and everything. So uh, it didn't (--) The difference was, well I don't know what the difference was. The only different was, was that you could drink in Massachusetts, but you couldn't drink in New Hampshire. Now whether they've changed that since then, I don't know.

Y: Drink what? Alcohol?

S: Liquor, like they have night clubs. They didn't have nightclubs in Hampton.

Y: [Unclear] Hampton, no?

S: You had all your bar rooms, or bars, or whatever, you know, shows, they had it at the uh (--) And they had a big ballroom in Salisbury too. It was called the Ocean Echo. They had a big, big ballroom there.

Y: Could the girls drink in those days?

S: No, you had to be of age.

Y: I mean suppose you are of (--)

S: No, you had to be of age to get in. They wouldn't serve you.

Y: I mean the attitude in general. Today they do you know, drugs and this and that. (S: Oh no, they didn't) In those days would uh (--)

S: You didn't see none of that. I'm sure they had all kinds of bar rooms. Some were better than others, you know what I mean. That you're going to get everywhere. Even in Lawrence, we had a place called the [Brass Square Roots?]. It was one of the lowest dives there was in the city of Lawrence. But you ought to see the place, it used to get packed over the weekend, because out of towners used to go there to see the shows that they put on. It was kind of like a wild place, but it was a sleazy place, let's put it that way. But they always got a crowd.

Y: When uh, did you notice there was a baseball, people started playing baseball at some point. When was that?

S: As far as I know kids liked to play baseball all the time.

Y: Because the reason why I'm asking is uh (--)

S: I'm, I'm sure we had all of these things, you know, but I can't recall now.

Y: In Pacific Mills, did uh (--)

S: You mean like the mills had their own? (Y: Did they?) Yes, they all had them. Yes, I think they all had them. I think they all played with one another.

Y: But only for men, not for women?

S: Well I can't recall. (Y: Did you notice uh) I can't recall. They might have had softball teams for women, you know, because we played that at school and everything. So I can't, I can't recall if we had that for, yes, they must have had different things. Bowling and playing ball. Of course. I think, I think they had all that. I can't swear to the women, but I know that the men had all that, you know.

Y: So these are uh, swimming, dancing, and the night clubs. What about movies?

S: God the movies! You know how many there was on one street on Broadway? I'm sure you heard of that. That was in "Believe it or Not" in Ripley's, had five theaters on one street.

Y: Do you remember the names?

S: There was uh, let's see, the Victoria was on one side. (Y: Victoria?) Victoria. And then across the street was the Palace, the Broadway, it's called the Broadway. The Modern. (Y: What's that?) Modern. (Y: How do you spell?) M O D E R N, Modern. (Y: Modern, all right) Modern Theater, and the Strand. (Y: Strand?) Strand.

Y: S T (S: R A N D) A N D.

S: Strand. Five shows on one street. I mean that was a lot when you stop and think of it. Then they had the Premiere on Essex Street.

Y: Primieu?

S: Premiere. It was on Essex Street. Then they had the Warner Theater on uh, Lawrence Street. Warner Theater. So you see you had plenty of places to go to.

SG-LA-T525

This tape begins with Sandra in mid-sentence:

S: You had was the radio. So I mean you know, it's either sitting at home listening to the radio. So naturally you want to go to the movies, or do something different. And you had such a choice

of movies. Plus the fact that at the Warner Theater you could see two pictures. You could see a show. Besides, and then coming attractions and the funnies. You could probably sit there for three hours and see uh, something different. Not like today, you only see one picture for about an hour and fifteen minutes and that's it.

Y: How much did you pay? Do you remember?

S: It wasn't very much. Uh, I, I don't know, like it, well I was just a kid then. Maybe you paid fifteen cents to go to the show, or something like that. You didn't pay very much. You know, you didn't pay very much.

Y: You don't remember. You are uh, too young for that. Do you remember the silent movies? Where uh (--)

S: Silent movies. You know I (--) Well when did the silent movies come out? Yes I remember we had somebody playing something, you know, like he'd play the piano. Sure the organs, or whatever they had. Of course. Uh, well when did the silent movies come out when you start and think about it? I can't remember. Don't forget, if I was born 1918 I wasn't going to the movies until maybe I was eight years old, or something. You know, whatever age you went. So kind of hard to, whatever times they might have had silent (--) I remember seeing picture that had the uh, whatever they call, the words underneath. You know.

Y: Do you remember your father and mother going to the movie theaters? Taking you with them?

S: Yeah. We'd all, we'd, like we'd go. It all depends. Like I say, you could stay three or four hours in the movies and see something different. That's how many things you got for your money. You saw two full pictures, plus comedies. You know, little, little comedies, plus coming attractions, and plus you saw a show besides.

Y: Who were pop (--) I mean probably you don't remember, but who were popular movie stars in those days? In your uh (--)

S: Well Rin Tin Tin I guess, [laughs] to the dog. Rin Tin Tin, oh god! I remember seeing (--) If I saw the names I would recall.

Y: Who was your hero?

S: I don't re (--) I was just a kid. I didn't have any heroes then, you know, just a kid. You don't uh (--) Like they, I think they had like [unclear] and oh god. It's funny how you remember certain ones, you don't remember those. And uh, you know, I guess Valentino was out and Vilma Banke. You're only a kid. You don't uh, you know what I mean, you don't see them in the same light. But uh, they used to have these uh, every week you would see a chapter. Every week you'd see another chapter. You know what I mean. And plus they'd give you dishes. I'll tell you something, for the money that you spent, if you spent thirty-five cents for a movie you got a dish every week you went, and you'd finally make a whole set. [Laughs] You know what I

mean. So.

Y: But they gave you plates?

S: They gave you plates. Every week they gave you a different plate. Like say you wanted, uh, I don't know, if you wanted extra plates I think you'd have to pay like a little extra money for the plates, or however you did it, you know. Finally when you got through you'd have the whole thing there. You know, you'd have a set for four people, or whatever. But everybody did it. That's the way it was. Plus the fact they used to have, you'd have a number on your ticket, or, they'd say save it and they gave out different things. You know what I mean? Like they'd put the lights on and your number was called to see if you won a prize. Oh yes!

Y: During the show?

S: Well they'd put the lights on, they stopped everything. And then those who won something, you know what I mean. They'd come out and say, this number one or that number. So you know, today it isn't like that. Nothing. They don't give you anything.

Y: Did you win anything?

S: I don't remember now. I can't recall. But it was nothing big. You know what I mean. I was just some, some little thing that you won. But uh, it was just part of the whole thing. And of course they had guys coming up and down the isles. You didn't have the machines for candy and stuff. The guy would come down with ice cream, or whatever. They'd put the lights on for intermission for a few minutes.

Y: There was intermission in those days?

S: No, I don't recall machines (--)

Y: I mean you said that the light came on between the movies?

S: The lights would come on and the guys would come down with their uh, with their little whatever they called them. Baskets, or whatever. And they have ice cream, and candy, and potato chips, and whatever you wanted to buy. You didn't have the machines. You didn't have somebody. That was afterwards, you know what I mean? It was somebody that came down and sold things.

Y: Did people eat popcorn in those days like today?

S: Did they have the popcorn machines are you saying?

Y: I mean uh, today everyone goes, whoever goes to the movies buys uh (--)

S: Oh god, we'd buy it by the buckets. God.

Y: Was that the same in those days?

S: No, they didn't have it, they didn't have it like that. I, if I think, I remember afterwards they'd just put it in a bag for you about that big, you know.

Y: Or did they drink as much Coke, Pepsi like today?

S: No! In fact if you went to the movies you brought your own things. You know what I mean, because you spend three hours there. You'd be hungry in that time. [Laughs] When I stop and think of it. God! Even, even uh, later on kids would still see. They used to go to a place called the Star up on Broadway, way down towards Methuen. Why they would stay there for five hours. They'd come home with a headache. Because they saw so many. Why they had chapters. They had this. They had two full movies. You know, one, one movie is enough. You can't stand staying in there any longer. But imagine sitting through two full pictures, plus the comedy, plus uh, coming attractions. And then like I say, you could spend four hours and see something different every time. So.

Y: Now let's go back to the mills.

S: Yeah, okay. Yeah. I know we're getting away from it. [Laughs]

Y: No, that's uh [laughs] (--)

S: We're getting away from (--) I'm giving you an idea anyway.

Y: When you started working you said uh, you started working at six o'clock.

S: Six in the morning till two.

Y: Six in the morning at the beginning. And uh, so when you came back home, did you take nap? Because uh (--)

S: Oh yeah, you're tired. You know, you uh, yeah, you would relax. And maybe you'd, whatever you brought to work, you didn't bring that much. You know, maybe a slice of bread and a piece of cheese. Well where are you going to put that food. I mean it's sitting around there. There's no uh, it's not air conditioned or anything. So you can't bring too much of anything. Hard boiled egg, or something, you know. And then when you came home you ate regularly, or whatever time you ate. But uh, that would be it. Yeah, you'd relax a little bit. Like my aunt used to get into bed after she came home and crochet. That was her therapy. She used to laugh. I says, after watching, I says I don't know how you can do that. I said, after watching that you know, you know, a weaver, it's a wonder her eyes don't go. And uh, looking at that all day long, and then coming home and using the crochet needles to crochet thing. She says, I like it, it relaxes me. So there you are.

Y: She was a weaver?

S: She was a weaver.

Y: And so in other words probably most of the people who started at six, when they came home they had their dinner.

S: Who know. Like I say, yeah. Because you got home, well you got home it was two o'clock. Well by the time you got home it was maybe two thirty. So you're not going to start eating, because uh, well see everybody worked different shifts. Like say you had somebody in the family, you worked six and your husband worked two to ten. So he's going to eat, he probably stayed home and cooked dinner, so when you came home it was ready. I mean you had to do it that way. How else were you going to do it, you know.

Y: Well that's uh, I didn't realize that. Uh, that's true. (S: Yeah) Not everyone in the family working the same shift.

S: They didn't all work the same time. No! I mean each one worked different hours. It all depends. You know, so you took what you could get. You didn't, you didn't squabble about, gee I can't go because it's not the right time. You just took what you could get, because there was nothing to pick from. So like I say, people in the family could all work different shifts. So whoever was home cooked whatever they cooked. You know, soup, or whatever they made. Uh, and uh, of course Sunday was your biggest day to bake something in the oven, you know, and all that. But what time did you have to do all that? You know what I mean? You didn't have the time.

Y: You in your family, when your father, mother, your sister and you were working, do you remember how it was? How did they look like when you came home? You sat down and ate by yourself? Or uh, (--)

S: Well uh, yeah. Because I think, I think my father worked nights, my mother worked days.

Y: So they sleep, saw each other?

S: So you know, there are only weekends. You know what I mean, more or less. I mean my mother, if we worked early we went to bed early. We didn't stay up. Whoever came home found, found the night light on. You know what I mean? By the time they got home you were sound asleep. How, how else were you going to uh, you can't stay up for somebody coming home at half past ten at night, while you have to get up at five o'clock on the morning.

Y: In other words, work (S: well work was) influences our personal lives. (S: Right. You have to, you had no choice.) And that's why I'm asking those questions.

S: That's the way it was, you know. (Y: yeah) And like I say, of course in those days houses weren't built like they had central heating and all that. You had a stove. And if you were using coal that's all that heated your house really.

Y: Where was that? In the kitchen, or?

S: In the kitchen. I mean I remember going to bed at night with my sister and the windows are frozen. Well they stayed frozen all winter. They never, you could never see through them. Because don't forget. They only have one pane of glass, they don't have double glass like they have today, and central heating and everything. That stove was the main thing. So you see, it wasn't easy really. You know, you get up sometimes, you got up uh, it was chilly. You stayed under those covers until you got up and you could see the cold air when you breathed when you got out of bed. But you, you rushed to the stove. That was your main thing in the kitchen. You rushed to the stove. That was your main thing in the kitchen. You rushed to the stove to warm up and everything.

Y: Did you see the stove upstairs there? The nice stove in the exhibit?

S: Yes. (Y: Did you have something like that) Well that's the way, sure. That's the only kind of heat you had. In the winter if you had like an extra room or something, say you lived in a five room you know, and you had an extra room like, you'd close that off. You wouldn't leave that open in the winter. As it was the stove did not heat all your bedrooms. I mean you kept your door ajar, like rather than uh (--) You might freeze the pipes if you closed the doors. So this is the way it was. And how many times did the pipes freeze over because it was so damn cold. Houses uh, what do you call it, they had one pane of a window. They didn't have double windows. They didn't have none of these things. And of course if the house got sold, you know, there's little openings here and there that you don't see, or the air gets in, or whatever. Not the, I don't think that they're that well built today either. But I'm just saying, you were chilly. There was no other way. That's the way everybody did it until they got, either they went from coal, because coal was a damn nuisance. You had to take the ashes out in the morning, and go sift them and everything. You know, you didn't just dump them. You had to go sift them, and then you had to put fresh, or whatever it was, and then uh, they turned to gas afterwards. But you could turn from gas to oil, then to gas. I mean from coal to oil, and then to gas. Because that's why I had. I had oil first, and then I went to gas afterwards, because gas was safer and it's cleaner and everything. You know, oil smells and all that stuff. So. But (--)

Y: Some people said that they used to gather in the kitchen.

S: Well they had to!

Y: I mean the neighbors, the neighbors. And they got the little parties, like they got together and they (--) Do you remember such a thing?

S: Well I mean, yeah. You, everybody had company. Everybody knew everybody, you know what I mean. Everybody knew everybody. You know what I mean. Everybody knew everybody. And somebody would come up to your house and sit around and talk.

Y: Where do they sit? In the winter obviously it was in the kitchen.

S: Well in the winter (--) Nobody, nobody went in the winter that much. Everybody stayed home in the winter. You know, it was too cold. And plus the fact that nobody visited too much

during the winter months, and they were working. You know what I mean? You probably did it like maybe when it got warmer and all that stuff. But not so much in, it was too cold in the winter.

Y: But if they came they probably sit in the [unclear]?

S: Well that's where you more or less, everything was done in the kitchen. The kitchens were bigger than they are today. You know, people today, they don't have big kitchens. They're more or less small, compact, you know, and then they, they're more or less in the dining room, or uh, living room, or den, or something. But at that time everything was in the kitchen, because it was the warmest, it was more cozy. You know, more cozy. You didn't worry. If you spilled something on the floor you could wipe it up. If you spilled something on a rug, you know what I mean? So they didn't use their parlors, that's what they called them, parlors.

Y: Parlors?

S: Parlors. They didn't use their parlors. Well living room or parlors, same thing. That was like a special room. Today people don't do that. They use every room in the house more or less.

Y: Yeah. Um, in the mills then (--) I'd like to talk about, a little bit about your work experiences. When do you want to go. Just tell me. (S: Shortly) We can stop anytime. (S: It's almost twelve) Because uh, because I have so many questions. There is no end.

S: Right.

Y: But I'd like to, since you work in the textile mills and then Raytheon, (S: Yeah, right, right.) Raytheon. And there are not many people like you. Somehow (--)

S: They stayed there until they left I guess. Until they closed.

Y: Yeah, something. Either they got retired after the textile moved all, uh, south, and uh, (--) So from uh, from the textile mills you went to the service. And uh (--)

S: I went in the service and then I got married. And then uh (--)

Y: How long did you stay in the service?

S: About two years.

Y: Did you go abroad?

S: I went overseas. I went in the Phillipines. (Y: Phillipines) I went to New Guinea.

Y: Huh. Wasn't it kind of, I mean that was kind of advantage.

S: It was an adventure.

Y: Adventure for a woman.

S: Everything to me was an adventure. When you're young I know the summer, we all complained in the service you know, about this and that, because you're not, you have to get adjusted to the way the service is. You know, it's not like at home. But I more or less accepted things. I'm the type, if I can't change something I learn to accept it. I think it's better for you.

Y: What did you do in the service? Was it active combat? No.

S: I worked. Well, no, they didn't have women in active combat. When we went to New Guinea we were in V-Mail. You know what V-Mail is? During the war if somebody wrote a letter they wrote a regular letter, right? Well that letter would be trans, it would be changed to V-Mail, which would be only about that big.

Y: Like the letter V? V (--)

S: Whatever you wrote and somebody else got, they didn't get a letter, they got V-Mail in place of it. Uh, you might say something. Sometimes you get a V-Mail letter and you look at it, it's blotted out, blotted out, blot. You say, Jesus. Well whoever was sending that letter was probably saying certain things that shouldn't have been said, you know. Somebody has to check all that. So that's what they used to do. They make V-Mail letters out of it.

Y: So in other words they monitor the letters.

S: Well everything had to be monitored. Sure. So that's what we worked on overseas.

Y: That's interesting. So whatever you found, and if you found something, I mean what they (--)

S: I didn't. I had nothing to do with that. Whoever checked those letters, you know. I, I had nothing to do with that. I only worked in wherever they were going. Liked we worked in a big place in the Phillipines. It was a huge place. And some of those letters, God, they, they went everywhere and came back to you again. Because the people who were in the service got transferred in different places, you know, moved around. By the time the letter would come, I got a letter that took a whole year to get to me. From whatever, whatever time that person wrote, until they found me. And I got, I said, God look at this. This letter is a year old. How do you like that? So there you are. That's how fact things can go in the service.

Y: Was it interesting in New Guinea?

S: Yeah. I didn't, no I didn't like New Guinea. I found New Guinea hot, humid, and that's the way it stayed, hot and humid. I spent about eight months there. Then I went to the Phillipines afterwards. I liked the Phillipines.

Y: But then you came back?

S: Then I came back.

Y: 1946?

S: Uh, it was about '45, around Thanksgiving. I remember being on a train going home on Thanksgiving. Somewhere around Thanks (--) We had Thanksgiving on the train. So it was in 19 (--)

Y: You were coming from the Phillipines by train? No.

S: Phillipines.

Y: By train?

S: By train. Well what they did was sent you (--) They gave you enough money if you want to take a plane, but if you want to save some money you take the train, which is cheaper of course. So that's what we used to do. So by the time uh, well I had to leave from uh, I think it was, I can't think whether it was San Franscico or not, you know, when we came back.

Y: And then you got married.

S: In '46 I got married. I went back to work in the mills.

Y: To the Pacific Mills?

S: In the Pacific Mills.

Y: You are so loyal to the mills. I mean (--)

S: Well no, they had your job waiting for you. Anybody that went in the service had their job to come back to. It wasn't like you were going to come back, there's no job waiting for you. So where were you going to go when you came back? You know what I mean?

Y: So that was a kind of requirement for those mills to hire you?

S: Oh yeah. That was, that was something they had to do. If you went in the service, they were very patriotic like, you know what I mean. I you went in the service, your job was waiting for you when you came back.

Y: So when you came back your job was waiting.

S: My job was waiting for me more or less. But then (--)

Y: The same shipping and receiving [unclear]?

S: I think so, now that I, I can't recall. Yeah, more or less. But uh, I, I forget now when they started leaving. I think it was around '54 or something. But see I had married somebody that

came from Lynn. So I moved to Lynn. So I didn't know what was going on around here more or less. But I think the mills started moving out.

Y: Yes. So in other words you did not work in the Pacific Mills long when you came back?

S: No, because I got married in forty-six.

Y: Forty-six? Then you went to Lynn.

S: I went to Lynn to live.

Y: And um, when did you then start in Raytheon?

S: When did I start in Raytheon? Oh, I didn't start in Raytheon till uh, let's see, was it seventy, seventy-three, somewhere around then. So.

Y: How long, how long did you work?

S: Oh, about twelve years.

Y: Seventy-three, so eighty-three, eighty-five. You retired recently then.

S: I retired in eighty-four.

Y: Eighty-four. You know the whole project is to find out how things changed (S: Yeah, right, right) from textile. The conditions, how it affected your lives, behind, after work hours. And then those uh, high tech companies, Raytheon came in. So you experienced both uh, both work places. What, what is your impression? Would you prefer working in the Pacific Mills?

S: Never. No. I mean in the end, my job, I couldn't complain about the job. You know. I mean it was a clean job. It wasn't noisy.

Y: In Pacific Mills?

S: In the Pacific Mills. Shipping and Receiving was like that. But in the uh, I forget now whether we had unions now in the Pacific Mills. I can't recall now. It seems like we had, but I'm not sure. But when I went to Raytheon, I mean (--)

Y: First of all how did you find the job at Raytheon? Did you know anyone who help you out Pacific?

S: I knew, I knew, no, I knew the vice, I worked for the vice president's wife. And that's how (--) I worked for the vice president's wife. I did office work around the uh, what do you call it, recruiting office. I did all kinds of odds and ends. It was hard to get into Raytheon. You had to know somebody there also! You have to know somebody! They have to have a certain amount of ethnic groups in there, right? And you know, you say, well I'd like to, I've seen families, I

don't know how the hell they do it. But like say, Puerto Ricans. They have the brother, the father, the mother, the sisters, how do they all get them in there? You know, when you stop and think about it. Cause I know they have to have a certain amount like that of minority groups. But I'm just saying, how did they get their whole families? Well that's how they get people in there. You know, you get in there you're going to get your daughter in, or you're going to get your wife in if she wants to.

Y: So in fact nothing changed, like the mills uh (--)

S: Nothing is changed! Oh no, no. That's what I'm trying to say. I worked for the vice president's wife. (Y: As what?) I'd type for her. Did part time work like, odds and ends, you know, part time work and stuff like that. And uh, anyway it wasn't paying me anything, you know what I mean. It wasn't easy. So finally I, my son worked for Raytheon. He got in there. So he says, Ma, why don't you put in an application? I says, how the hell am I going to get there? You know, I don't have transportation. They did have busses going to the IRS, but they never went to the Raytheon. They had a bus coming from Lowell to the Raytheon Company, but they didn't have one from Lawrence. So finally they got one coming in from Lawrence, from Raytheon. There were two buses. But before that how are you going to get there? You have to know somebody who's got a car, who's working there. And if he has a different shift, or she has, what good is it? So that's the way it went. But anyway, that's how I got it through. I talked to the woman that I worked for. I'm not going to mention names. And uh, anyway, I says look, I'm desperate for a job. I said, I need something full time, I need something that can pay me some money, you know. I mean she's very nice to me and everything. And I said, I know you're husband is the vice president there, I'm sure you can help me get in there. I need the job desperately. And that was true. I needed something that paid something. So anyways, she says I'll see what I can do. Within two weeks they called me to go. In the meantime I was working for a New York Toy Company here, which paid you peanuts and you worked like a slave. You worked like a slave! And when I, I didn't want to tell him anything when I was going into Raytheon. I wanted to make sure I passed my, what do you call it? (Y: test) Test. Uh, you know, for your eyes. Examination. So when I told him, get this, Monday and Tuesday I had to go to Raytheon for different checkups, and tests, and stuff. And anyway, when I went and told them I said, oh, I said I'm going to be leaving at the end of this week. I'm going to work in Raytheon. Or did, I give him two weeks notice. I figured I give him two weeks notice. It was only fair, right? Because I told him at Raytheon, she says, you can start as soon as you want. And I says, well I'm working somewhere now. And I said, I'd like to give him some notice time, which is only fair, huh? So she said, okay. So I mean she kind of gave me a date at to when to start like. So when I told him about it he says to me, oh you can leave now if you want. I said, well I thought I'd finish out the week for you. He says, no, you don't have to. I says, here I was trying to be half way decent. He says, oh, you're going to Raytheon? Well of course I'm going to Raytheon. It's better pay! It's better environment! It's air conditioned! It was, well the job wasn't that easy either, you know what I mean. But the point was you were getting paid for what you were doing. You weren't a slave like at the New York Toy. That was, that was a slave shop. That was really a slave shop. So. Naturally everybody is going to go to places like Raytheon, or, or these other big [unclear], because they pay better. You know what I mean? They pay much better. These places, they give, giving you the minimum. Now what can you make with the minimum? So this is what I'm saying?

Y: How long did you work there? Toy, New York Toy Company?

S: Oh I don't know. I think about a year and a half, almost, or something. You know what I mean. See, it was convenient for me. I could walk over there. So it was good that way, but the pay was terrible, and you worked (--) I'll tell you when I got home I lay on that couch, I can't get up. My, every bone in my body, well we used to make all kinds of toys. You have to shove them in the boxex, you know. And uh, then other things. They had these wires that they put on a, on a thing. And you had to put this plastic on these wires. And these were the kind of toys, I thought it was dangerous anyway. They were perforated holes like, and the kid could crawl through. It was like a tunnel thing, you know what I mean. Now you, you had to take those off of there and push them out, and check them out to see if they're okay. And pull them up again and shove them in a box. And believe me, you worked like a dog, you know, you worked like a dog.

Y: How did you feel after that kind of job? Suddenly you found yourself in Raytheon?

S: Well it was all together different. Raytheon, you, you more or less had to use your head more or less, you know.

Y: Did you like that?

S: Yeah. I like challenges in a way.

Y: That's why I asked you at the beginning.

S: Yeah, I like challenges in a way. The job is interesting of what you do. But it's like everything else, when you're doing the same thing over and over, you get sick of it too, you want a challenge, or something else, you know. But it was interesting work. Well we made missiles there. So naturally you know, our parts would go into that missile. So.

Y: So what was your uh, I don't want any secret information, but what was your nature of your job. What did you do? Soldering, (S: I worked, no), or did you put together, assemble?

S: They were going to put me on soldering first, because you don't know what you're going to do. They don't, they don't question you. You know, they don't question. You just put down on the application if you had four years of high school, four years of college, whatever you had. And whatever job was available at that particular time, or what department needed you. So I'm sitting downstairs, and she says uh, oh you're going to, going to (--) I says, you know what I'm going to be doing? So she said, oh yeah, you're going on soldering. I said to myself, soldering? That's you know how, your eyes after awhile. And you've got to be careful of that soldering. I said I think I'm too old to be soldering. You know what I mean. [Giggles] But anyway, this boss came down. And anyway he needed somebody in his department. So he turned around to me and started talking. And he says, you're going to be in my department. I says, soldering? Oh no. He says, you're a what do they call it? Uh, what do they call that when they make, it's not clay? Potting! Potting applicator. I was the potting applicator. So here I'm thinking, well

what's potting? I'm thinking of pots, you know. That has nothing to do with that. It's filling in pots. You're uh, it's an insulator that you're working with. You work with all kinds of chemicals constantly. You got to mix chemicals. You've got to weigh them out. You got to know how much grams to put of this, or how much grams to put of that. It has to come out the right way, you know what I mean? Then whatever you put together, you got to insulate it with this. That was the, in the potting department. Everybody did some kind of potting, but it was always with chemicals.

Y: So you measured chemicals and mixed them together?

S: You measured all kinds of chemicals. You have to, sometimes you have to wear something over your face, because of the powder was so fine. Even if you put a little bit, you could see it. You know, we had to work under this, what do they call that?

Y: Yeah, I know what you mean?

S: Well you have to have that, because if you didn't it's going to fall back on you, you know. So.

side one ends
side two begins

Side two begins with Sandra in mid-sentence.

S: Conditions that you work under. We worked in a room that was isolated. We didn't have a window in the room. We had ovens across the walls. See everything you worked with, it's still potting, that was the old room. You had to put it in the oven to dry. It might be there for three hours, or whatever, you know. And that's throwing off heat all the time, isn't it. And yet there's not windows anywhere, there's no air conditioning. If they had any kind, I says, you could go in there in the winter, wear sleeveless blouses, that's how warm it was. And of course all those fumes, all those chemicals aren't good for you. You're breathing them in aren't you all the time. So. Finally we got out of there, because we had so much complaints. We brought in, I forget what they call this outfit that they, they have to check on certain things to see if they're okay for you, or whatever. Is it hurting you. And uh, anyway, of course with the company everything is perfect, you know. And it's not and you know it. But anyway, finally we got out of that room, it was all closed in. Would you like to be closed in like this, with all kinds of fumes? You know we did have uh, you had to work under uh, what did they call that? I can't even think of it. But anyway that was, that was the only place that was, that was cool.

Y: They put ventilators on?

S: Ventilators. That was the only place that was cool. Where you sat, if you sat near the oven you felt it all day long, you know, because it was throwing off heat all the time. But anyway, finally they moved us to an open place. It was all opened and it was air conditioned. I mean

other rooms were air conditioned, but some were closed in like ours. And uh, anyway it was much better to work in. But you still had to be careful of the chemicals, you know. We're all breathing chemicals of some kind.

Y: Were you concerned that you would (--)

S: Not in that, not in that room I wasn't concerned. I was concerned in the other room, because like I say, the uh, the work uh, I mean it could have been a lot better than where we worked afterwards, you know what I mean. Here you're in a closed in room. They're aren't any windows or anything. Nobody can see you. They have to come in. They don't even know where to find you sometimes, because they look for you. It's not open where they could go by and see through the glass. We were in a room that nobody could find us. You know what I mean. That's how isolated we were. So like I say, when we got out of that. I think because we caused a little complaint they decided, they, they always change in these factories any. They try to make it better really for people, you know. So finally we got out, we're right on the isle. It was wide open. And of course if you worked with chemicals, if it was a fine powder they tell you to put something across your face. Like you have these masked and all that stuff to put on, you know. So uh, and if you worked with certain things you had glasses to put on, safety glasses. Things like that, you know.

Y: Did you, did they train you before you start, or just said uh (--)

S: You just learn through somebody else. They have a book. And of course you have to read that. It's like the bible. You know, you have to read for your type of work, which you don't understand anyway, even if you read it. How the hell you going to understand it? That's like an engineer. You have to be shown all these jobs, you know. And you, you pick it up as you go along. You learn to do other things as you go along. You know.

Y: So they uh, they did not train you? You learned while you were working?

S: Well I didn't learn by myself, I learned with the group leader. She has to know all the jobs in the place.

Y: What I meant was, sometimes they say we will train you for one week, or three days, or five days.

S: Yes, right, right. Well I'm just saying that if that particular, it might have been a week that she'd have to show you the different things. And you had to be picking it up on your own afterwards. Yeah. Yeah.

Y: And did you take any test, whether you could use your hands? Like in Western Electric they uh, gave them a test uh, whether you can use (--)

S: What do they call this? Uh, what do they call that test? I know, it's to see how fast you are with your fingers?

Y: Did you take such a (--)

S: Dexterity test?

Y: Dexterity.

S: Not on that job. My job was not like at Western. Our job, you cannot push, you cannot shove, you cannot say, how many you going to make? My boss used to say, how many giros can you put out, you know, in front of the big wheels. That's to make him look good too you know. I'd say uh, maybe twelve. Maybe I could do fifteen, but I'm dam if I'm going tell him I can do it. Stupid me. When you first come in you don't know any better, but somebody else tells you, don't push it, don't rush the job. Meaning like, what are you pushing this job for? You know what I mean, you're going to run out of it afterwards, which is true in a way. So our jobs were not the kind you could push or rush.

Y: You were like a chemist. You mixed things [unclear]?

S: But you had to learn how (--) Yeah, because if there was something new coming up and that needed a different kind of insulation, you had to look it up in the, in the book, and it would tell you what, what to use and how much of the grams or whatever you needed. Yes. I mean you've got to learn all of these things?

Y: So those solutions, or those jars you prepared were used towards uh (--)

S: They were cans, some of them were in cans. Now if you were going to make like quite a few, say you had fifteen giros to insulate, you have an idea of how many tubes you need. Like you used to have to use a gun, like a tube, you know. And you just pressed it and you fill it in and all that stuff. So you would, you would figure you'd make maybe a whole quart full, see. So that way we'd fill up three guns, which is enough. It covers you. Of course there's waste too. You can't, you can't expect it to come out just right, but I mean you always made a little more than what you do. So. Yeah.

Y: So you did not really know what you are insulating, but that thing was what you were producing.

S: Well more, more or less. That's work that came into our room all the time, more or less. It wasn't one thing. It was all kinds of uh, what do you call? What we had was, say I was a ten, that was my number. Somebody would be an eleven.

Y: Ten means there was only one person with number ten? (S: No.) Or the department?

S: We were all number tens. That was what the job required. A ten to work on that. A number eight would work on a different job. She required uh, what do you call it? Not that she had more skills, but she got promoted to uh, say an eight. She'd go from maybe a ten, to a nine, or an eight. It depends who was next in line to get promoted, or something.

Y: So what, I don't understand. So those numbers (S: yeah) represented their skill or pay?

S: The skill and the pay.

Y: So the higher, or the lower you go.

S: The lower the number to more money you made.

Y: So how far did you climb up?

S: Well I was an eleven, then I became a ten. Automatically you become, you know what I mean, like a ten or something. And uh, somebody underneath me, somebody over me, like an eleven, she can do my job too, but I can't do an eight job, or a nine job. You know what I mean?

Y: Is it like a government GS? Nine GS, eleven, they use GS. Uh GS ten.

S: No. No, no. (Y: That is for) Just a number. Ours was a ten, somebody would be an eight or something. You know, she (--)

Y: How do they promote you? Do you remember?

S: Well the thing is you can stay a ten for the rest of your life if that's what you want to be. But automatically you uh, what do you call it? I don't know whether, I forget now whether they change you themselves or something. Because I remember I was an eleven when I got in then, and then I became a ten. You can go to a nine and an eight. You look on the board and there are job openings. And if you want to make more money it's up to you. The only think with that is, what if you had ten, or fifteen, or twenty years in there, and you start a new job. If they ever have a, what do you call it? If they're uh, not hiring anymore people, or not making uh, you're low man on the totum pole in other words, you can be laid off even if you had twenty years in there. You understand what I'm saying? Because she, she went on a new job. So you're (--)

Y: Seniority [unclear].

S: The seniority does not count on that particular job. You're seniority counts on what you've been doing before. You know what I mean? So this is what it is. If there was a lay off or something, and somebody, oh yeah! There's been a lot of people who worked like say in Lowell, came to Lawrence to work, Andover to work, because they got laid off in there. And they were openings here, so they had to come here.

Y: That's interesting.

S: That's what I'm saying. So you weren't, you weren't like to eager to u, what do you call it? Change to much. But there was like a catch to it if there wasn't any lay offs or anything. But if things are getting (--)

So your seniority doesn't count for everything all the time.

Y: In a way it is an indirect pressure on people and not to get promoted.

S: In a way. In a way. If somebody doesn't have too much time in there, and she want to go to

school, or she wants to try for another job, all she has to do is put an applications in or something. And if they need them they would tell them. I've seen girls go from ten to a five. And they made a hell of a lot more money that I did. You know what I mean?

Y: Was it piece work? No.

S: No. It's not piece work. Uh, they just uh, as things went along, when I got in there things were like, nobody was like pushing you. After awhile you get different bosses. You know even the bosses have to show what they can do also. If some, sometimes the work comes back, sometimes those missiles don't work, there's something wrong somewhere. So they have to check it, recheck and check, and recheck it. And if there's too many bad things in your department, the engineer goes right out the door. I've seen, I've seen guys who've had twenty years and gone out that door. Because either things weren't turning out right and it's costing them a lot of money you know, to do all these kinds of things. So there you are. But anyway they, they change, and things are getting tighter all the time. I said well, I says, we don't have to work because we do our job. But there was a lot of slackers in there too. A lot of people who, I found a guy behind uh, what do you call it? Those uh (--) What do they call these dam things. I'm, I'm losing my mind. (Y: laughs) Anyway he's sleeping behind there! Look, I says, Jesus Christ. I says, look at this, will you? You're not going to go squeal. But I'm just saying [unclear].

Y: [Unclear] standing up [unclear]?

S: No. He puts paper on the floor and then lays behind there. Who's going to look at him over there? You just, you just went there for some reason or other. I men bosses don't usually go there to check. You know.

Y: Yeah. There, there were bosses around checking people?

S: Oh, well you always had a boss there. You know, you had a regular, regular boss there. And he, he was the one that has to tell you what to do and what not to do, or something. And uh, of course you had your uh, group leader. Well I mean you know, (Y: section hand like) A group leader, section hand more or less. And if you need something she gets it. She's got the keys or whatever it is if you need something, you know. Other than that I mean our boss is okay. It's just that he, he kind of pushed certain (--) See the thing is, certain people that work, they balance out for those who don't work. Do you understand what I mean?

Y: No.

S: Those that aren't producing. I mean in our job you can't push the work out. The work had to be done the right way, you know what I mean. Slowly and doing it right. And how, how can you pressure yourself trying to push it out? Because when you do that, you look at the giros, whatever we, I always stayed on giros more or less. So you get to know them real well. They're not done right. There's holes inside of them. You got to pull the whole thing apart to do it all over again. So why waste all that time. But anyway, I'm just saying certain things you can do faster than others, you know. But like I say, we had a lot of people that didn't produce. You

could, you could see it. And those that produced, it balances itself off somehow.

Y: It did not matter for those people? They did not get fired?

S: You had a union in there. You uh, you can't (--)

Y: I mean if you sleep how can you argue that you're?

S: Well who's going to tell? Who's going to tell anybody that he's sleeping there? I'm not going to go squeal on him. I might call him a name, you know, but I'm not going to go squeal on him. But I'm just saying, there are people and the boss gets to know who works and who doesn't work after all, right? Say there's about oh, maybe twenty people in our department only, he can tell who can work, and who doesn't work.

Y: But he couldn't do much about changing it?

S: No, the only way uh, if there's too many complaints about him, because we had one kid and their father was there, his mother worked there. He was the laziest kid. His work wasn't good at all. He didn't pay attention to what he was doing. And you know, you could see it. He'd, he'd be sleeping on the uh, uh, what do you call it, thing? (Y: Bench [unclear]) Well not at his bench. God no, because you were wide open there. But where uh, where you have to work under a light, like a blue light or whatever. He'd be sleeping there. You'd see his head down there like this. I says, look at this will you? You know. But the thing was, I think he's still there. So there you are?

T: And what's his name, my, well my boss used to say uh, I can't think of his name now. Anyway he'd say, I got to get rid of him. I says yeah, he's only taking up space around here, that's about it. You know what I mean? He was a good kid, but he did not produce anything, do you know what I'm saying? Instead I says, these kids, they don't know any better. They've never worked in mills, they've gotten into places where their family got them in. The job is uh, I don't say it's a 100% clean, but at least it's half way decent to work with. I says you're not working under those kind of conditions we worked in the mills. And I said, and they don't appreciate it. They don't. It's these old timers, you know, like say somebody like fifty or over that worked in these places. They're the ones that produce in these places. At one time people didn't want the older people in, right? They wanted the younger ones because they think they're faster. They weren't. They found that they weren't producing. They found that they were, they weren't, they weren't capable of doing that work. And then they had all these old people, older people coming in. Well they're dedicated to their job. They're tickled that they're working there. They appreciate it. So that's what the difference is.

Y: So those people who were coming from textile mills who saw those conditions (--)

S: More or less. Oh they were. Of course, they in better conditions, they worked there. They were more dedicated to the job. They produced. They did better work and everything, because they were hard workers. The younger people that come into these places, they're not used to any of those things.

Y: How can we explain that?

S: Don't ask. Well it's the times I guess, because you work like a dog.

Y: I mean did the attitude change suddenly, it did not change suddenly?

S: No, the attitude did not change. I always believed in wherever you worked you give them your monies worth. That's what you're there for, you know?

Y: No, I mean from generation to generation, those uh (--)

S: Because I think the younger, the younger kids, they want something now. The want something and they want something good. You know what I mean. But that isn't always (--) See they didn't have to go through certain things. I mean times are in uh, what do you call it? I mean there are, these aren't bad times. I mean we all have a deficit in every darn city. I don't know why, but we do. But I'm just saying kids today can get a job more or less anyway. I don't, they don't even want these jobs that they get uh, what do you call it? (Y: McDonald's) Yeah. And they pay what? Five dollars an hour. And some of them don't even want them. But the thing is, these other places, your benefits are better for one thing. You have better benefits. You know, like uh (--)

Y: Where? In Raytheon?

S: Raytheon has good benefits. Western, whatever they call it, AT&T. Uh, I mean you are covered, I don't say 100%, but you are covered and if you went to the hospital you didn't pay for anything you know, stuff like that. So I mean they had good benefits. I can't say anything. And the money was pretty good too. You know.

Y: How did you solve your transportation problem? You said you did not drive and you did not [unclear].

S: I did not drive and we took a bus as far as IRS. Get this. We took a bus as far (--) Do you remember where IRS is in Andover? Well next to it is Raytheon. But Raytheon is set way in the back. The dam bus drivers used to drop us off at IRS and we had to walk from IRS to uh, what do you call it, Raytheon. We said to him, take us down as far as the Gate if any. He wouldn't even do that for us. So we squawked like hell. So finally somebody called somebody. She says, girls the next morning that bus is going to Raytheon. And it went, and that's where it went from then on. And it went twice like say, ten minutes of six and then ten minutes of seven. But imagine dropping us off at IRS and saying sorry ladies, you got to walk, or whatever you have to do. And like I say, Raytheon isn't just around the corner, where IRS is just out you know, on the main road. You had to walk way the hell inside.

Y: So you never had your drivers license?

S: Oh no, no. So we took the bus and then a new guy came in to our department like. So

somebody uh, he was an Italian. He talked with uh, (Y: accent) I think he came from Italy or something. And uh, anyway somebody said to me, he lives in Lawrence. You want to what do you call it, show him how you get there or something? And I said, yeah. So he had a car and he said to me, if you want a ride I'll take you in, you know. So I says sure, which is better. Because from where I lived I just went to the corner and got the ride. So he did that for five years until he went on nights. So then I went on the bus again.

Y: Did you pay him for the gas?

S: Oh you had to pay. Yes, you had to pay him, yeah.

Y: And what are the conditions? You said there were air conditioning. Did they play music in the background in Raytheon, in some departments, or in your [unclear]?

S: Well I'll tell you something. You know, you're not going to please everybody no matter where you are, right? I like the music. I thought the soft nice music, I'm not talking about this draggy stuff, I'm talking (--)

Y: Did they, did they play it?

S: They played music. Finally put a stop to it, because others were complaining, they didn't like the music. So there you are. So see. I used to like the music. I mean it was light music, you know, not heavy, or, or making a lot of noise, or whatever it was. And I says, people still complain about, they don't, they don't want music. So there you are. They didn't have music.

Y: They took it off?

S: They took it off.

Y: And how long did you do the same job there. The mixing of [few words unclear].

S: Oh, I worked, I worked all that, all the time. I never changed my department as long as I (--)
When I got in there I stayed there. Never changed. Never got layed off either.

Y: You seem to be loyal to what, you stuck to Pacific Mills. (S: Well no. Yeah.) In those days when you worked in the mills people tell me that they bounced like a rubber balls from one mill to another. And you seem to be (--)

S: Well. No. I would say Raytheon was the longest I ever stayed in one spot. But that doesn't (--)
I was just fortunate that I didn't get layed off. In fact when they had, when they had a uh, a slow, a slow time and they'd say well, I have to let some people go like. You know, they can sign up and collect checks, or whatever. And so anyways I said uh, all right, I'll take it like for two weeks. That's all you were out, just two weeks, you know. So you just opened up your claim, or something. I think you only collected for one week.

Y: In Raytheon

S: In Raytheon. But I didn't have to if I didn't want to. I had enough of time in, see. It was the others who didn't have (--) Anybody that has less time than you are going to go out the door first, naturally.

Y: But they, they paid you for those layed off.

S: Well no. If you signed in, if you signed (--) When you opened it up, you, you didn't get anything for that. No, the first time when you did it you did not get paid for it, because you had to open up a claim, and I think you have to wait a certain amount of time. You have to sign up so many time, or something. But of course if you wanted to time for yourself, you know what I mean, because you want to do something, or whatever, that's the only time. I never took it after that. I only took it that one time. I think somebody was sick or something, and that's why I took it off. But other than that my claim was opened just in case if I ever got layed off. But I was never layed off. So I was just fortunate.

Y: What about in the Pacific Mills? Did you get ever layed off in the Pacific?

S: Yeah, I think I was, but I can't tell you when, or whatever. I collected so many checks. Yeah, you collect so many checks. Sure.

Y: While, while you were working in the Pacific Mills?

S: Yeah, when I was working the Pacific Mill I think I collected. I mean you didn't work as steady as uh, especially if you're new, you know what I mean. You didn't have enough time in or anything. So it was a different thing.

Y: In terms of making friends and socializing with people around you, uh, which place was better? Could you, did you make good friends when you worked in the Pacific Mills?

S: Well Raytheon. Naturally you, you're in a group like. It's a different thing. In what do you call it?

Y: In what group?

S: Well you're working with a group like, you know what I mean, but it doesn't mean anything. You know other people that work there. You get together at lunch time, or you get friendly with the ones you work with. Then you get together at lunch time. Or you go out to something, or whatever, you know.

Y: Did you make friends in Raytheon? (S: Yeah) Did you? Good friends?

S: Sure. Yeah. You mean somebody that I would see (--) Oh yeah! I still uh, this other woman and I, we're very friendly. What do you call? I think you met her. She's got this white hair. We were coming out of, yeah. Well she worked there over twenty years longer. And she retired before me. And we were friends in there. And she showed me a lot of jobs to do and everything.

And we come out we were still friends. And we still are friends. You meet other people. See they don't all come from Lawrence. They come from Methuen, they come from Lowell, they come from everywhere. So it isn't always somebody that you know, that you're going (--) You're friendly with them, you get together on certain things. they have uh, different parties, or something. but uh, you don't always mix with them. A lot of them are married. You know, stuff like that. So you don't always mix with them.

Y: So in terms of satisfaction, people talk about job satisfaction. So if you look back uh, (--)

S: I would say Raytheon was the best place I worked then. Naturally. It was clean, you know what I mean. It wasn't (--) I'm not saying that other places in Raytheon that uh, some people didn't like Raytheon. Some people, it depends what job you're doing, you know what I mean. So like I say, if you can (--) To me it was a, it was a good place to work at after working in these slave shops here. Paid you the minimum wage and wanted a lot more out of you, and didn't give you nothing. You know, you had nothing to show for it. So naturally you're going to go to places like Raytheon, if you can get into them, but no, no. It was uh, they were always uh, fair with you. I can't say anything against them.

Y: Yeah. Some people say we go work because of people we work with. Some people say, I go there because I like my work, what I do. You know, there are two different groups. One people, one person is interested in people he or she works with, and the other person is uh, which type are you?

S: I just learned to adjust to the situation. I don't try to make waves. I don't always say uh, what do you call, no I can't say anything. The girls that I work with, or the women that I work with, we got along fine.

Y: So we are going to quit soon.

S: I know we're going to quit shortly, yes.

Y: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Two or three more minutes. Uh, you had from your marriage one son you said. (S: Right) And uh, he's a teacher. (S: A teacher, right) Where does he teach?

S: At the Vo, Lawrence Vo-Tech, or Andover Vo-Tech. West Andover, yup.

Y: But at one point, at one point he was working also in the Raytheon?

S: He worked in Raytheon. He worked in New Hampshire first. When he got out of school he went to New Hampshire. He went, he went to school at the Vo -Tech. That's where he started. He went to New Hampshire. I told him, I says Bob, I said if you're smart you'll go to Western, or you'll go the Raytheon. That's where the money is.

Y: You didn't want him to go to textile mills, obviously.

S: There wasn't any textile mills.

Y: There wasn't any, but if there were?

S: No. Well I mean if you have a better education for some training, aren't you better off? Anyway he wanted to start in a small company. He said, I want to grow with that company. So he went to New Hampshire, he found this small little company. There's a lot of electronics. But he was going nowhere. They paid him fifteen cents in two years. Was that what you called a raise? That's all they gave him. He's, my son is very dedicated. When he does something, he does it 100% and one. Anyway finally he got a job in Raytheon through his friend, because he was a technician. And he said, why don't you come to Raytheon? You'll make better money and this and that. And he says, there's enough of work here for eight years. So naturally you figured gee, eight years. You know, you're going to there. Well he stayed there two years and they laid him off. And he didn't find anything for a long time. So he decided to go into teaching. He had an opportunity to go and he did it. He likes teaching. So.

Y: Umhm. And so just one brief question. So you got divorced from your husband, right? And uh, so you have now your pension? (S: Yeah) From Raytheon.

S: Raytheon. You go (Y: In other words, what did you get from, after working?) you go according to how many years you've been in there. They uh, every two years when they sign a new contract they, they add say two more dollars, or whatever it is to your pension. So whatever, how much time you've had is what they, whatever you were getting at that particular time. That's what you get for your pension.

Y: So you are, enough to survive.

S: I'm surviving. [Chuckles] What else.

Y: If you would organize your life from the beginning, would you do anything different? It is a hard question.

S: Well I can't, off hand I can't think of uh, what do you call it? (Y: No) No. I can't think of, you know, you could say well, if I could have had this, or, well we all say that. You know what I mean, but uh, no. I can't say, well I should have been smarter and done this or that. You know, nobody is that (--) When you look back, of course, because you've learned with all of this passing of time. Haven't you matured in all that time? Of course you have, the same, the same as anybody. It's just the way things happen, that's all. You know. You don't know ahead how things are going to be. You always think it's going to be better than what it really is. But uh, so you can't, you can't just uh, to say uh, (--) Well I'll tell you something, if I had, if I had my way to do it over again, I would have never got married. I would have stayed (--) Well I won't say I wouldn't have never got married. I would have stayed in the service and made a career of it.

Y: Yeah, I wanted to ask you how come you did not use GI Bill after coming back. Didn't you have the [unclear?]

S: Well yeah, I went to hair dressing school in Lynn. I went to (--)

Y: But could you, if you wanted could you go to college with the GI Bill?

S: Of course you could. It depends on you. You know, you had the opportunity then.

Y: They gave you the opportunity.

S: They gave you the opportunity to do anything you wanted to do. I went, I went to uh, what do you call it? I went to hair dressing school.

Y: And what came out of it?

S: I got uh, what do you call it? No, nothing came of it. It uh, it was something that you thought you wanted to do really, but it really wasn't after I came out. You know, it wasn't. So uh, it just didn't work out, that's all.

Y: So the government, the government paid for it?

S: Of course the government paid for that. Naturally. The thing was, I think I got, I got pregnant, that's what it was. It got pregnant then. So I couldn't go to school. I was pregnant. How was I going to have a baby and uh, start uh (0--)

END OF TAPE